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Abstract of the national paper of Morocco

1. Morocco, aware of the spin-off benefits of space technologies in the economic and social spheres, has instituted a dynamic, realistic and sustainable policy for their inclusion in its development projects. As a result of high-level political commitment, Morocco has built up its human resources and a body of users, in particular in the fields of telecommunications, Earth observation and space meteorology.

2. Since the 1970s, Morocco has been integrating those technologies into its development programmes. In the field of space telecommunications, Morocco operates several regional satellite programmes and has signed a number of agreements with international organizations in order to strengthen its national capabilities in the areas of information exchange, data transfer and communication, with a view to focusing decision-making in a number of sectors and to meeting the country's priority needs with regard to natural resource management, environmental protection and land-use planning. The establishment of the Royal Centre for Spaceborne Remote Sensing (CRTS) in 1989 has contributed to the development of integrated projects and operational applications through the coordination of the efforts of all national partners, the installation of infrastructures tailored to requirements (in particular for data and information access) and the establishment of an exchange and cooperation network with partners abroad.

3. Morocco is pursuing its policy of raising awareness and promoting the expansion of space applications to other fields (space technologies, space sciences, etc.) by intensifying cooperation programmes and training activities. Seminars, exhibitions and symposia are regularly organized to make policy and decision makers, scientists and young people aware of the actual and potential contributions of remote sensing and space science and technology. In this connection, a National Remote Sensing Committee has been set up to coordinate the activities of the various ministerial departments. This Committee produces a newsletter on space-related activities. In addition, CRTS publishes *Géo Observateur*, a scientific journal that reports on the results of research and other work carried out in developing countries using satellite data and geographic information systems.

4. In the area of training, Morocco's Mohammadia Engineering School houses the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology—in French language, whose first training programme will begin in late 1999. Morocco will also have a centre for continuing training and skill-upgrading in advanced technologies within CRTS. This centre, which is being provided with purpose-built facilities (classrooms, practical workrooms, documentation sections and lecture halls equipped for interactive distance learning), is geared to the requirements of the countries in the region.

5. As part of its international policy, Morocco is actively seeking to develop its international cooperation in the fields of space science and technology. It is conducting various activities with the aim of extending its network and strengthening its North-South and South-South bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

6. At the regional level, Morocco is participating actively in the formulation and implementation of regional projects, in particular in the regions of Mediterranean Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Having organized the International Space Year Conferences for Africa in 1992 and 1995 on the use of remote sensing by satellite in support of the environment and development in the Africa-Middle East region in collaboration with space agencies and regional and international organizations, Morocco will shortly be organizing the third International Space Year Conference for the area, the aim of which is to enhance information- and experience-sharing between the countries of the region. It has also hosted several events in cooperation with regional and international organizations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, European Association for the International Space Year (EURISY), etc.).

7. Morocco also accords particular importance to the execution of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Since 1961, it has been a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Morocco has been playing an active role in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies since 1992 and has provided the Committee's Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur since June 1997. In addition, Morocco has ratified four of the five treaties governing the use of outer space. Its accession to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space is currently under examination by the relevant governmental bodies and specialized institutions.

8. Morocco has contributed actively to the preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), has hosted the Regional Preparatory Conference for UNISPACE III for Africa and the Middle East and reaffirms its commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Conference.

9. All these activities, in addition to its dynamic participation in several other regional and international associations and committees which are active in the field of outer space (the Space Agency Forum, EURISY, the International Astronautical Federation, the International Space University, the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, etc.), indicate the importance that it attaches to cooperation for the development of the peaceful uses of outer space to the benefit of all nations.